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COOS COUNTY (OREGON), PRELIMINARY ECONOMIC RECONNAISSANCE AND ESTIMATE OF GROWTH, 1960-2010

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Prepared by: Economic Studies Group
Water Supply and Pollution Control Program
Pacific Northwest

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ENGINEERING BRANCH
COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT

WORKING PAPER #8

(Basin #13)

COOS COUNTY (OREGON)
PRELIMINARY ECONOMIC RECONNAISSANCE AND ESTIMATE OF GROWTH, 1960-2010

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I

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Analysis

This analysis is intended to provide a preliminary estimate of the economic potentials and anticipated growth of the subject area.

Definition of Area

The study area, Coos County, is divided into two parts--the Coos River Basin and the Coquille River Basin. The political boundaries of Coos County correspond fairly closely to the combined drainage area of the two river basins. A small portion of each basin extends into Douglas County, but these small areas are mountainous and nearly uninhabited. In addition, small areas at the northwest and southwest corners of the county are outside the physical boundaries of the Coos and Coquille River Basins and drain directly into the ocean.

For purposes of this economic analysis, the Coquille River Basin is defined as the area included in the following 1950 Census County Divisions: Bandon, Coquille, Myrtle Point East, Myrtle Point West, and Powers. The Coos River Basin is defined as the remainder of Coos County.

Study Period

The study period is the 50-year period 1960-2010, with an interim point at 1980.

Limitations of Analysis

Two limitations apply to this study. The first is that it is intended only as a preliminary estimate of the outlook for the subject area's growth. Subsequently, in connection with the Columbia River Basin Project for Water Supply and Water Quality Management, an analysis will be made on an industry-by-industry basis of the growth potential in the various sub-basins. At that time, this preliminary estimate will be reviewed, and revised if necessary.

The second limitation is that this study is intended for use particularly in assessing future water needs. Emphasis has been placed on the analysis of those industries which make heavy demands upon the water resource. Other industries have been considered only insofar as they may have a significant effect on future population. For this reason, this study is not submitted as a detailed industrial forecast.

PRESENT ECONOMIC BASE

Population

Total population in Coos County, as of April 1960, was 54,955. Table I shows how this population was distributed among the various cities and rural portions of the two river basins comprising the county. In the Coos River Basin, there are four cities which, together with two unincorporated communities of over 1,000 population

each, are all clustered together and form a single urban area. The population of this Coos Bay Urban Area constitutes 67 percent of total Coos River Basin population. The remaining 33 percent of Coos River Basin population is "rural," a term used in this report to include not only agricultural population but also small unincorporated communities. In the Coquille River Basin, there are four separate cities, whose combined population is equal to about half of that Basin's population.

Table I
Population of Coos County, April 1960

Coos River Basin[1]		Coquille River Basin[2]	
Bunker Hill Community	1,655	Bandon City	1,653
Englewood Community	1,382	Coquille City	4,730
Coos Bay City	7,084	Myrtle Point City	2,886
Eastside City	1,380	Powers City	1,366
Empire City	3,781	Total, 4 Cities	10,635
North Bend City	7,512	Rural portion of basin[4]	10,115
Total, Coos Bay Urban Area[3]	22,794	Total, Coquille River Basin	20,750
Rural portion of basin[4]	11,411		
Total, Coos River Basin	34,205		34,205
Total Population in Coos County, comprising Coos and Coquille River Basins			54,955

1/ Defined to include the following 1960 Census Divisions: Bunker Hill, Charleston, Coos Bay, Eastside, Empire, North Bayside, and North Bend.

2/ Defined to include the following 1960 Census Divisions: Bandon, Coquille, Myrtle Point East, Myrtle Point West, and Powers.

3/ The four cities and two unincorporated communities shown in the Coos River Basin are all immediately adjacent to one another and comprise a single Urban Area. The only urban population in the Basin is in this Urban Area.

4/ Included in the "rural" classification are suburban areas and small unincorporated communities as well as the agricultural population.

Source: U. S. Census of Population, April 1960.

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Table II shows the population growth in the cities and rural portions of the Coos and Coquille River Basins during the past decade. The 1950-60 decade was a period of rapid expansion in Coos County. Only two counties in Oregon, Curry and Washington, exceeded the population growth rate of Coos County. All of the cities of the county participated in the growth. Rural population, particularly in the Coos River Basin, also increased. However, growth in the rural portions took place largely in the suburban areas around the cities. Agricultural employment decreased from 1,219 in 1950 to 705 in 1960; and the farm population included in the rural portions declined during the decade.

Table II
Growth of Urban and Rural Population in Coos County, 1950-1960

City or Area	1950	1960	Compound Annual Rate of Growth %
Coos River Basin[1/]			
Bunker Hill Community	1,409	1,655	1.6
Englewood Community	950(e)	1,382	3.8
Coos Bay City	5,223	7,084	1.4
Eastside City	890	1,380	4.5
Empire City	2,261	3,781	5.3
North Bend City	5,099	7,512	2.1
Coos Bay Urban Area[2/]	17,032	22,794	2.5
Rural portion of Basin[3/]	7,599	11,411	4.2
Total Coos River Basin	25,431	34,205	3.1
Coquille River Basin[4/]			
Bandon City	1,251	1,653	2.8
Coquille City	3,523	4,730	3.0
Myrtle Point City	2,033	2,805	3.6
Powers City	895	1,362	4.4
Rural portion of Basin[3/]	9,132	10,115	1.0
Total Coquille River Basin	16,834	20,750	2.1
Total Coos County	42,265	54,955	2.7
State of Oregon, Total	1,521,341	1,768,687	1.5

(e) Estimated
1/ For area included, see footnote 1, Table I.
2/ See footnote 3, Table I.
3/ See footnote 4, Table I.
4/ For area included, see footnote 2, Table I.

Industry

The economy of Coos County is heavily dependent upon lumber and wood products manufacturing. About nine out of ten manufacturing workers are in lumber and wood products industries. The ratio was about the same in 1950 as in 1960. Coos County is one of the few areas of the state where employment in lumber and wood products manufacturing increased during the 1950-60 decade. Table III shows the employment pattern in Coos County.

Table III
Employment by Industry, Coos County, April 1950 and April 1960

	1950	1960	1960 as % of 1950
Population of Coos County	42,255	54,955	130
Total Employment	16,681	19,111	115
Agriculture	1,219	785	64
Forestry and Fisheries	277	280	101
Mining	49	12	24
Manufacturing, TOTAL	6,852	7,109	104
Lumber, Wood Products	6,170	6,289	102
Food and Kindred	255	259	105
Print. and Publish.	117	181	155
Other Manufacturing	310	370	119
Construction	956	882	92
Services	7,057	9,677	137
Industry Not Reported	251	366	146

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1950 and 1960

Coos County's specialization in lumber and wood products manufacturing is emphasized by comparing the distribution of employment there with the distribution of employment in the Portland Region as a whole, as shown in Table IV. About one-third of the entire labor force in Coos County is in lumber and wood products manufacturing, compared with only 12 percent in the Region. The Portland Region

is defined to include all of Oregon plus five southwestern Washington counties. Employment in agriculture, on the other hand, is considerably below the Regional norm. Since 1960, there has been some diversification of the Coos County economy with the establishment of a small paper mill on Coos Bay. However, the economy remains almost wholly dependent upon the timber resource.

Table IV

Employment Distribution, Coos County and Portland Region, April 1960

Percent of Employed Civilian Labor Force

Industry	Coos County	Portland Region 1/
Agriculture	4.1	7.1
Forestry and Fisheries	1.5	.7
Mining	.1	.2
Manufacturing, TOTAL	37.2	24.5
Lumber, Wood Products	32.9	11.9
Food and Kindred	1.4	2.8
Print. and Publish.	1.0	1.4
Other Manufacturing	1.9	8.4
Construction	4.6	6.3
Services	50.6	50.6
Industry Not Reported	1.9	2.6
TOTAL Employed Civilian Labor Force	100.0	100.0

1/ The Portland Region is defined to include all of Oregon plus five southwestern Washington counties.

Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

ESTIMATED FUTURE GROWTH

Factors Influencing Future Growth

The economic base of Coos County rests at present almost exclusively on the timber resource and this will continue in the future to be the main support of the economy. However, diversification of the types of products built upon the timber base can lead to growth in the number

of employed. The most important possibility in this respect appears to be the manufacture of pulp and paper products. The most likely site for such pulp and paper manufacturing is around Coos Bay. Production of the order of 1,000 tons per day by 1980 and 2,000 tons per day by the year 2000 appears to be possible.

Particular assets favoring expansion of manufacturing around Coos Bay include deep water port facilities, fresh water supplies derived from nearby sand dunes, railroad facilities, and a convenient location relative to large timber holdings of Georgia-Pacific and Weyerhaeuser Corporations.

Economic expansion in the Coquille River Basin is expected to be at a slower rate than in the Coos River Basin, which has more complete facilities. However, some spill-over of economic growth from Coos Bay is likely to benefit the Coquille area. The City of Coquille will also participate in county-wide growth since it is the seat of county government.

In addition to the anticipated expansion in pulp and paper manufacturing, the timber resource is expected to support additional production of lumber and wood products. Not only the timber in Coos County, but also that in the northern part of Curry County is likely to be processed in cities in the Coquille or Coos River Basins.

Other factors which may provide some future growth and further diversification of the economy include tourist-oriented activities along the coast and in the national forests and minerals, among which are titanium-bearing sands.

Future Population

The possibilities for additional jobs in Coos County appear to be sufficient to permit county population to grow in the future at a rate about equal to that for the state as a whole. A preliminary estimate of future growth of state population, based upon the U. S. Census Bureau's "Series II" projection of national population, is as follows, expressed in annual compound percentage rates:

1950-1980:	2.3
1980-2000:	2.0
2000-2010:	1.7

For reasons referred to in the preceding section, the population of the Coos River Basin is expected to grow considerably more rapidly than that of the Coquille River Basin. Within each basin, urban population has in the past been increasing more rapidly than rural population; and this trend is expected to continue. Table V provides a preliminary forecast of future population for Coos County and its various parts. In Table V, the several cities in the Coos Bay Basin, which are all adjacent to one another, are treated as a single Urban Area.

Table V is submitted as an illustrative calculation of the population that would develop in the various cities and areas of Coos County

if the growth rates shown in the table are assumed. It should be noted that projections for small areas are subject to even greater hazards than those inherent in projections for entire counties or sub-basins since the loss of a single mill or the addition of a single mill can represent a very large percentage change. While projections for small areas are inevitably somewhat arbitrary, a number of factors which were taken into consideration in calculating Table V should be mentioned. Already discussed are the assumptions that total county population will increase at about the same rate as that expected for the state as a whole, that the Coos River Basin will grow considerably more rapidly than the Coquille River Basin, and that rural population will represent a continually declining proportion of total basin population. It is assumed that the rural population in the Coos River Basin will grow more rapidly than that in the Coquille River Basin because "rural" is defined to include all suburban areas. There are no incorporated cities in the Coos River Basin outside the Coos River Urban Area, so that the "rural" portion of the Basin includes all of the Basin outside that Urban Area. Growth in the Coquille Basin will not only be smaller, but divided among four incorporated places, so that it will probably produce less suburban development. Annexation policies of the various cities represent an additional and unpredictable variable. Among the cities in the Coquille Basin, Coquille will grow because of the location there of county government and because of its close proximity to the Coos Bay Urban Area. Bandon, the only sizable community in the

county located directly on the ocean, is expected to benefit from the tourist industry. The future of Myrtle Point and Powers is more difficult to anticipate. However, they are both located on the railroad and also on a road leading to the national forest lands in the northern part of Curry County. Powers is expected to experience a nominal increase in employment as a result of the Eden Ridge development of Pacific Power and Light Company.

Table V
Estimated Future Population in Coos County, 1960-2010
(Population to nearest thousand)

City or Area	1960 Pop.	1960-1980 Rate of Growth %/Year	1980 Pop.	1980-2000 Rate of Growth %/ Year	2000 Pop.	2000-2010 Rate of Growth %/Year	2010 Pop.
Coos Bay Urban Area[1/]	22.8	3.2	42.9	2.8	74.5	2.4	94.4
Coos River Basin, Rural	11.4	1.5	15.4	1.1	19.2	0.8	20.8
Total, Coos River Basin	34.2	2.7	58.3	2.4	93.7	2.0	115.2
Bandon, City	1.7	2.0	2.5	1.7	3.5	1.0	3.9
Coquille, City	4.7	2.4	7.6	1.9	11.1	1.4	12.8
Myrtle Point, City	2.9	1.9	4.2	1.0	5.0	0.6	5.3
Powers, City	1.4	1.8	2.0	1.0	2.4	0.6	2.6
Coquille River Basin, Rural	10.1	0.9	12.0	0.4	13.0	0.2	13.2
Total, Coquille River Basin	20.8	1.6	28.3	1.0	35.0	0.8	37.8
Total, Coos County	55.0	2.3	86.6	2.0	128.7	1.7	153.0

1/ Includes cities of Coos Bay, Eastside, Empire and North Bend, and unincorporated communities of Bunker Hill and Englewood.